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PP RUEHAG RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHROV
DE RUEHAH #1256 2671150
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1598
INFO RUCNLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4328
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2140
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2005
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2576
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2917

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001256

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/23/2018
TAGS: PREL MARR MOPS SOCI SNAR TX
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: STATE COUNTER NARCOTICS HEAD SAYS
"AMERICA IS THE ONLY ONE THAT DELIVERS," ASKS FOR SPECIAL
FORCES TRAINING

REF: A. ASHGABAT 1229
     ¶B. ASHGABAT 1238

Classified By: Charge Sylvia Reed Curran for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) State Counter-narcotics Service Chairman Murat
Islamov asked DATT and Office of Military Cooperation Chief
for U.S. assistance in helping his Service to develop a
special forces capability to counter armed drug traffickers.
He asked specifically for special forces or counter-terrorism
training for his men. He said where there are illegal drugs,
there are guns, money, and there can be terrorism.
Therefore, the Service needed its own armed-capable units.

¶2. (C) Describing the type of special forces units he was
envisioning, Islamov said that it would be a quick reaction
force. Not everyone in the Service would receive weapons
training. However, when needed, other men could be replaced
by members of this quick reaction force.

¶3. (C) Contrasting U.S. assistance with that of other
nations, Islamov said America is the only one that
"delivers." He said that Turkmenistan had received lots of
offers from many different countries, but the United States
was the only one that follows through on what it promises.
(NOTE: In June, Islamov had told emboffs that the Russians do
not provide aid, they just complain about the United States.
END NOTE.)   Because the United States is such a dependable
partner, Turkmenistan is reallocating resources based on U.S.
commitments. For example, since the United States has
already agreed to provide communications gear as part of
bilateral counter-narcotics cooperation, Turkmenistan instead
will use the money that would have been spent on that to
construct 12 additional small border posts.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: The shoot-out between heavily armed men and
police/military September 12-13 (Ref A) was a wake up call
for the Turkmen. It was obvious from reports of the police
performance that not only were they confronting a superior,
although smaller force, but also the police were confused and
scared. President Berdimuhamedov convened a special state
security council meeting to decry the incompetence of the
police and to call for better training (Ref. B). Islamov is
the latest Turkmen official to echo the president's call.

Under former President Niyazov, the person who was protected was the president. Police charged with keeping the general peace were not given the weapons' training that their counterparts in other countries would get as a matter of course. It was not a priority, and Niyazov may have even viewed an armed, trained police force as a threat.

¶5. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: The Khitrovka shoot-out aftermath provides an opportunity for the United States to supply the Turkmen with the counter-narcotics/counter-terrorism training that is obviously needed. And, providing much needed, dependable cooperation further cements our bilateral relationship. Nevertheless, we need to keep in mind that Turkmenistan is a neutral country, and one that still receives a great deal of pressure from Russia. They will take our training to fill an obvious need and take it under cover of that obvious need to fight "narcotraffickers." They will still be mindful of redlines, which include not giving any country something to question Turkmenistan's neutral status. END COMMENT.
CURRAN